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RITUAL

OF THE

SOCIETY OF VETERANS

OF THE

REGULAR ARMY AND NAVY

OF THE

UNITED STATES.

WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING THE RULES AND REGULATIONS
GOVERNING COMMANDS.

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[Official Edition, as adopted by the Board of Trustees.]

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR,

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1888, in the office of the
Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

P. F. MCBREEN, PRINTER, 61 BECKMAN STREET, NEW YORK.

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DIAGRAM OF COMMAND ROOM.

1ST SERGT.

CAPTAIN.

COM. SRGT. QM. SRGT.

2D SRGT.

2D LT.



3D SRGT.

1ST LT.

1ST CORPL.

2D CORPL.

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ALEXANDER B. BUTTS,
Commander-in-Chief.

OPENING CEREMONIES.

At the proper time, the Captain of the Command will give three raps and then give the command, ATTENTION !

He will then direct the Guard to take their places and the outer door to be closed, the Third Sergeant on the inside and in charge, the First Corporal on the inside and the Second Corporal on the outside of the door; after this is done and the Command room properly guarded, the Third Sergeant will stand at attention, salute, and say :

Captain, ALL'S WELL !

The Captain will acknowledge the salute, address the Second Sergeant, and say :

Second Sergeant, are the officers of this Command present and in their proper stations ?

If they are, he will salute, and say :

Captain, they are.

If they are not, he will salute, and say :

Captain, they are, except (*naming them*).

The Captain will fill the vacancies *pro tem*, and say :

The Second and Third Sergeants will take up our countersign from all persons present and report to these Head-quarters.

When satisfactory, the Captain will say :

The countersign is correct and duly received at these Head-quarters.

He will then give the command :

Command, salute !

Acknowledges the salute, and says :

Officers and comrades, once more we meet in LOYALTY, INTEGRITY and OBEDIENCE.

I now declare — Command, No. — of the Society of Veterans of the Regular Army and Navy of the United States, duly opened and in order for business.

Gives one rap with the gavel and the Command will be seated. He then says :

The first business in order will be the reading of

1. First Sergeant's report.
2. Quartermaster Sergeant's report of funds in hand, which must be entered by the First Sergeant on his minutes.
3. Reading of Orders.
4. Propositions and reference of applications for membership.
5. Reports of Committees on applications for membership.
6. Election of new members.
7. Mustering in.
8. Reports of Committees.
9. Unfinished business.
10. New business.
11. Collection of dues.
12. Commissary Sergeant's report of receipts of the evening, which must be entered by the First Sergeant in full and itemized on his minutes.
13. Closing ceremonies.

CLOSING CEREMONIES.

The Captain will say :

If there is no further business to come before this Command, I now declare — Command, No. —, closed until our next regular meeting, unless sooner convened by order.

No one shall be admitted during the opening, muster in or closing ceremonies, nor while the First Sergeant is reading his report.

MUSTER IN CEREMONIES.

When the order of business of "mustering in" is reached, the Captain will say :

Second Sergeant (*who rises in his place, stands at attention, and salutes*), you will ascertain if there is a comrade in waiting for muster, and report to these Head-quarters.

The Second Sergeant, after ascertaining whether there is a comrade in waiting or not, will advance to the centre of the room, stand at attention, salute, and if there is a comrade in waiting, will say :

Captain, I find in waiting and ready for muster, comrade

The Captain will then turn to the First Sergeant, and say :

First Sergeant (*who rises in his place, stands at attention, and salutes*), has this comrade been regularly elected to membership in this Command ?

The First Sergeant will answer in accordance with the facts, and if he answers, "Captain, he has," the Captain will turn to the Commissary Sergeant and say :

Commissary Sergeant (*who rises in his place, stands at attention, and salutes*), have you received the required initiation fee of this comrade ?

The Commissary Sergeant will answer in accordance with the facts, and if he answers, "Captain, I have," the Captain will say :

Second Sergeant (*who has remained standing in the centre of the room*), you will present comrade —— to these Head-quarters for muster.

The Second Sergeant salutes and then accompanied by the comrade for muster, again advances to the centre of the room, facing the Captain, salutes and says :

Captain, by your direction, I present to you comrade —— who has been found worthy of admission to our ranks and now awaits your orders.

The Captain will then say :

Comrade —— it is with pleasure that I welcome you into this Command. Your recommendations have convinced us

that you merit the honor we confer and are worthy the responsible trust with which we are about to invest you. The objects for which we are associated together, are to unite in social fellowship and fraternal intercourse all persons of good moral character, who have served in and who have been honorably discharged from the Regular Service of the United States, to provide for the support and maintenance of its members, during illness, to assist them in distress and to secure their proper, orderly and decent interment in case of death, and to provide for such of their widows and orphans as shall be in needy and destitute circumstances, to perpetuate the memory of the glorious and patriotic deeds of the Army and Navy of the United States and to inculcate and cherish a feeling of Loyalty, Integrity and Obedience to the principles of the Constitution and the laws of our Country.

If you are willing to join us in this pleasing work, you will raise your right hand, and say :

"I (*pronounce your name in full, and repeat after me the following obligation*), in the presence of Almighty God, and these comrades assembled, do solemnly promise that I will support the Constitution of the United States and bear true allegiance to the National Government ; that I will maintain and defend the sovereignty of the United States, paramount to any and all allegiance, sovereignty or fealty I may owe to any state, county or country whatsoever ; and that I will at all times obey the legal officers, and the Constitution, laws, rules, regulations and orders governing the Society of Veterans of the Regular Army and Navy of the United States and the By-Laws of any Command of which I may be a member.

"I further promise that I will at all times, and to the best of my ability, observe and carry out the business and objects of said Society ; and this obligation I voluntarily assume and promise to fulfill, upon my honor as a man and a comrade."

It is well, we cheerfully accept the pledge you make us. We share with you in this covenant and do now receive you into this command.

Comrade —, we hail with true pleasure your coming among us. The great work in which we are engaged is sufficient for us all and we shall rejoice to find you excelling in your zeal that of the most devoted members of our Society.

The responsibilities of our Society rest lightly upon the faithful, and we trust that you will bear them with that meekness and grace, which is found only with the good and true. Our motto is **LOYALTY, INTEGRITY and OBEDIENCE.**

LOYALTY to our God, our country, and our country's banner,

With **INTEGRITY**, act towards a comrade and in no other manner,

While **OBEDIENCE** to the laws of our own making is a pleasure.

The L. I. O. are symbols meant to be a treasure.

The Second Sergeant will now invest you with our grip and countersign.

After this is done, the Captain will say :

Our salute is the ordinary soldier's salute now used in active service, and is given in this manner :

Raise the right hand smartly, pointing in the same direction as the right foot, the palm of the hand down, the thumb close to the forefinger, the arm extended and horizontal. (2.) Bring the right hand around till the point of the thumb and side of the forefinger touch the lower edge of the cap or visor, at the same time turn the head a little to the left, look toward the person to be saluted, and retain this position till the salute is acknowledged. (3.) Bring back the hand and arm to the position of the first motion, at the same time cast the eyes to the front. (4.) Drop the arm quickly by the side.—*Upton's Tactics.*

If you wish to obtain admission to a command, while in session, you will present yourself at the outer door and give the Second Corporal our countersign, he will then report your presence to the First Corporal, and when satisfactory, the door will be opened and you will be admitted.

Upon entering or retiring from a command room, while in session, you will advance to the centre of the room, face the Captain, stand at attention and salute, wait until your salute is acknowledged, then take your seat or retire, as the case may require.

If you wish to address the Command, while in session, you will rise, stand at attention, and salute, at the same time say, "Captain," then wait until recognized; when recognized, the Captain will acknowledge your salute, give one rap of the gavel and call you by name; you will then be entitled to the floor and at liberty to speak.

Our sign of recognition is given in this manner: When meeting a comrade in the street, or elsewhere, you will salute; if recognized, the comrade will acknowledge your salute by a firm clasp of the right hand, at the same time he will say, "comrade."

The gavel is used thus: Two raps call up the officers; three raps call up the Command; one rap seats them or calls to order.

The Second Sergeant will now conduct you to the First Sergeant's desk, where you will sign the By-Laws of this Command; after which you will be re-conducted to these Head-quarters.

Upon the comrade being again presented, he will be conducted to a position close to and immediately in front of the Head-quarters, instead of the centre of the room as before, the Second Sergeant will then salute, and say:

Captain, I again present to you comrade —, who has signed the By-Laws of this Command and now awaits your orders.

The Captain will give the command, ABOUT, FACE! (the Second Sergeant and comrade about face) then the Captain calls up the entire Command by three raps of the gavel, and says :

Officers and members of — Command, No. —, of the Society of Veterans of the Regular Army and Navy of the United States, I present to you comrade —, who is now a member of this Command. You will join with me in giving him a soldier's welcome.

The Captain will give the command :

Command, Right, FACE ; Forward, MARCH !

The Second Sergeant will leave his position at the side of the new comrade, take the floor and act as Master of Ceremonies, the officers and members close up, with 13 inches from belly to back, form a circle, the First Lieutenant leading and the Second Lieutenant last, march around the room in front of the new comrade, singing something familiar, as a greeting, and as they reach the comrade, give him a hearty and cordial shake of the hand. After the last one shall have passed the new comrade, the Captain gives the command :

Command, HALT ; Left, FACE !

The Second Sergeant will then see that the comrades are properly aligned in a circle, facing inwards, leaving a space on each side of the new comrade for the Captain and the Second Sergeant to enter. The Second Sergeant then takes a position in the circle on the right of the new comrade. The Captain then enters the circle on the left of the new comrade, thus completing the circle, all join hands, and the Captain, or some one designated for that purpose, makes the following prayer :

Source of all wisdom, truth and love, grant to us that in the reception of this comrade, we may add strength to our strength and grace to our grace. Oh, may the golden chain thus lengthened become the brighter for this link and be strengthened for the great work we do. Enlarge our powers to benefit mankind and honor Thee, our God. And when one by one each link shall fall away in death, may the parting be temporary and the meeting eternal, in the world where death comes not, may we realize the full happiness of loving and serving Thee forever. Amen.

After the prayer, something familiar may be sung ; " Nearer my God, to Thee," would be appropriate ; at the conclusion, the Captain will resume his station, seat the Command by giving one rap of the gavel and proceed with the next order of business.

Should there be more than one comrade in waiting for muster, all will be mustered together, using the plural instead of the singular.

INSTALLATION OF THE OFFICERS OF A COMMAND.

The officers of the Command having been duly elected, and the proper time having arrived, an officer of not lower than the rank of Captain will proceed to the duty of installing the officers elected into their respective stations. The installing officer will appoint a Sergeant to assist him, and say :

Officers and Comrades : I am now prepared to install into their respective stations the officers of this Command. Sergeant, you will present the officers elect to these Head-quarters for installation.

The officers are arranged by the Sergeant in a line in front of and facing the Head-quarters, the Captain on the right, the First Lieutenant next, and so on according to rank. The Sergeant will then address the installing officer by his official title, and say :

The officers elect of this Command are in order before you and await your orders.

The installing officer will then say :

Comrades, you have been elected to fill the different offices of this command for the ensuing year, but before entering upon the discharge of your duties, it will be necessary for you to take an obligation for their faithful performance. If you are willing to take such an obligation, you will raise your right hand, say I, repeat your name in full and say : do solemnly pledge my honor as a man and a comrade, in the presence of Almighty God and of this Command, that I will, to the best of my ability, faithfully and impartially perform all the duties incumbent on the office to which I have been selected, that I will conform to



the charter, laws, rules, regulations and orders of the National Head-quarters and of my superior officers, and in every way within my power, assist in carrying out the objects and business, and in extending the usefulness of the Society of Veterans of the Regular Army and Navy of the United States.

Drop hands to the side and the installing officer will say :

Sergeant, you will conduct the Captain to these Head-quarters, and the other officers to their different stations.

The Captain having been conducted to Head-quarters and placed at the right of the installing officer, and the other officers to their stations, the installing officer will call up the Command, by giving three raps with the gavel, face the Captain, and say :

Captain, I now present you with this gavel, emblem of your authority, and as no one should disobey it, I confidently hope that you will never use it in an arbitrary or dictatorial manner, remembering that we should charitably temper justice with equity.

The officers' salute is : *First motion.* Raise the right hand till the tips of the fingers touch the visor opposite the right eye, the thumb closed, the fingers and hand extended in prolongation of the forearm, the elbow down. *Second motion.* Lower the hand briskly and to the right till the point of the fingers are at the height of the shoulder and in front of it, the elbow advancing slightly, the hand and fingers still extended in prolongation of the forearm. *Third motion.* Drop the hand by the side.—*Upton's Tactics.*

The installing officer and the Captain will then face the command, and the installing officer will give the command, "COMMAND, SALUTE," then pass the gavel to the Captain. The installing officer will then say :

By the power in me vested, I proclaim the officers of this Command regularly elected and installed for the ensuing year.

The Captain will then pass to his station, acknowledge the salute, and with one rap of the gavel seat the command.

RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING COMMANDS.

1.—A Command may be formed by the Commander-in-Chief, with the approval of the Board of Trustees, on the written application of not less than five persons eligible to membership in the Society of Veterans, upon the payment of five dollars.

Command charters may be surrendered voluntarily when less than five members desire the continuance of the Command.

The First Sergeant and the Quartermaster's-Sergeant of each Command shall, through the Captain, make a quarterly return on the first days of January, April, July and October, on blanks furnished by the Board of Trustees. The First Sergeant's return shall be made to the Adjutant-General, and the Quartermaster's-Sergeant's return shall be made to the Quartermaster-General.

Commands shall be assessed a per capita tax not exceeding fifty cents per annum on each and every member in good standing therein. Such tax shall be forwarded to the Quartermaster-General in quarterly installments, with the quarterly return, on the first days of January, April, July and October.

2.—In case of surrender or forfeiture of a Charter, the property of the Command, including books of record and papers, shall be immediately turned over to the Quartermaster-General and become subject to the disposition of the Board of Trustees.

3.—Every application for membership to a Command must be made upon the form of application blanks furnished by the Board of Trustees.

4.—Stated meetings of each Command must be at least monthly. Special meetings may be convened by order of the Captain or at the written request of five members in good standing. At all meetings five members in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

5.—Officers of a Command shall be a Captain, First and Second Lieutenants, Quartermaster and Commissary-Sergeants, First, Second and Third Sergeants, and First and Second Corporals, to be elected by a majority vote at the first regular meeting in December of each year, under the order of new business, except the First Sergeant, who shall be appointed by the Captain on the evening of his installation.

6.—The officers shall be installed at the same or next regular meeting following their election, under the order of new business, and shall hold office until their successors are elected and installed. All vacancies in office shall be filled at the next regular meeting succeeding such vacancy, but such election shall be only for the unexpired term.

7.—The Captain shall preside at all meetings and appoint all standing committees. He shall not vote upon any question, except in case of a tie vote, when his vote shall decide the question without debate; he shall also be entitled to vote on the election of officers.

8.—During the absence of the Captain, the First Lieutenant shall take command, and during the absence of Captain and First Lieutenant the Second Lieutenant shall take command. If neither of them are present, the Command shall elect a Captain *pro tempore*.

9.—The First Sergeant shall be the Recording Secretary, and shall keep a correct roll of the Command, make a record of all receipts and disbursements, and of all business transacted at meetings and perform such other duties as appertain to his office and as the Captain may direct. If the First Sergeant shall be unable to attend any meeting, he shall send such books and papers as may be necessary for the transaction of business to the Command meeting, and the Commissary-Sergeant shall act in his place during his absence.

10.—The Commissary-Sergeant shall be the Financial Secretary, keep an account with each comrade, and shall be present with his books at all regular meetings; he shall receive all monies and pay the same to the Quartermaster's-Sergeant, and take his receipt therefor; notify all members in arrears, and he shall perform the duties of the First Sergeant during his absence.

11.—The Quartermaster's-Sergeant shall be the Treasurer and the custodian of all monies and property belonging to the Command; pay all bills duly audited and authorized; keep a correct account of the same and submit such accounts for inspection and examination whenever required to do so by the Captain or the Command. He shall not pay out any money except upon a draft signed by the Captain and First Sergeant, and approved by a vote of two-thirds of the members present entitled to vote at any regular meeting. He shall give a bond in such an amount as the Command may require.

12.—The Second Sergeant shall prepare and conduct all Candidates for muster. Conduct visiting comrades and with the Third Sergeant take the countersign at the opening of the Command meeting.

13.—The Third Sergeant shall act as the Sergeant of the Guard at the door, report the names of persons applying for admission to, and admit no one without orders from, Head-quarters, and with the Second Sergeant take the countersign at the opening of the meeting.

14.—The First Corporal shall guard the door on the inside and report to the Third Sergeant all persons applying for admission, and await his orders before admitting them.

15.—The Second Corporal shall guard the door on the outside and receive all persons applying for admission and report the same to the First Corporal.

16.—Commands may adopt By-Laws for their government not inconsistent with these Rules and Regulations, Charter of the Society and Orders from competent authority, and may alter or amend the same, provided, however, that all Command By-Laws and Amendments must be first approved by the Commander-in-Chief before taking effect.

By Command of

[OFFICIAL.]

ALEXANDER B. BUTTS,

Commander-in-Chief.

A. J. FARMER,

Adjutant-General.

DATED—

HEAD-QUARTERS SOCIETY OF VETERANS OF THE REGULAR
ARMY AND NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES, NEW
YORK CITY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1888.





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